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Approved For Release 2000/08/23 : CIA-RDP62S00346A000100270001-7

27 December 1956

Chief, Economic Research

Chief, Materials Division

Comments on draft of SNIE 100-2-56: Enemy Capabilities  
to Mislead the US.

1. In a real sense, ONE has undertaken an impossible job. The question directed at ONE by the Killian Committee and the NSC is very typical of the kind of questions asked by outsiders when they are briefed on the operations of the Agency. Similar questions have been asked at the National War College, Strategic Intelligence School, etc. It seems to be very difficult for anyone on the outside to be given an answer which will satisfy him short of making him an insider. To put it in another way, our conviction that we are not being hoaxed, at least on the overt side, is considerably greater than can be demonstrated in a written presentation of this kind.

2. Page 2. The author mentions four methods of deception or hoax. It seems to me that most of the discussion is really about the first of these, i.e., planting false information, and that the paper almost ignores the problem of false impressions, selective releases, and obfuscation. False impressions and selective releases are typically more of a problem than the deliberate planting of false information, at least on the DD/I side.

3. Pages 5-6. These pages discuss the time dimension of the problem. It seems to me that this discussion could be considerably simplified, since it is one thing to perpetrate what might be called "a one shot" hoax, and quite another thing to consistently falsify or mislead on a wide range of activities over a long period of time.

4. Page 8. This page makes almost the only explicit reference to the use of collateral and confirmatory evidence. Many of the later reassurances depend on accepting information as substantially true because it fits reasonably well into a context. Actually, we have been reasonably successful, on the overt side at least, in using confirmatory evidence.

5. Page 12. There is a statement on this page that any substantial falsification of figures, reports, directives, etc. might also deceive communist functionaries and produce confusion. It

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seems to me that this single sentence could stand a great deal  
of amplification and strengthening.

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6. Page 27. We find the statement "...US intelligence agencies are confident that most of their estimates are not likely to be vitiated by host even in those instances where the evidence is insufficient to permit a very firm judgment. The reasons for this confidence will be illustrated in the paragraphs which follow." It seems to me that the paragraphs which follow leave the reader much more uncertain than this statement suggests.

7. Page 11 ff. The examples given on page 11 and succeeding pages constitute some of our most important intelligence targets. They are also cases in which hoarding is atypically easy because the Russians practice so much concealment. Hence, the examples do not give a well rounded picture of where we stand. Although, annexes B, C, D, and E may do so, the text does not discuss the ways in which one kind of intelligence source verifies another kind.

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D/M/RR: [REDACTED] :mif/3011 (27 Dec 56)

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